This is a course in the political philosophy of Plato. The guiding questions will be: (1) What is justice? (2) Is it good? (3) Why do we care for justice? and (4) How is our concern for justice related to politics and philosophy? Today, it is not uncommon for students to ask: Why bother with Plato? Aren't there up-to-date thinkers who have more to teach us? The short answer, I believe, is no. Moderns have produced theories of justice by the truckload, but none has thought through the complexities of the common sense view of justice with as much care as Plato.

I. **The following book should be purchased for the course:**

Plato, *Gorgias*, Nichols edition
Plato, *Apology*, West translation (most of you probably already have this)

II. **Class outline:**

We will cover the whole *Gorgias* section by section. If time remains at the end of the semester, we will read a portion of Plato's *Symposium*. I will also make frequent references to Plato's *Apology*. If you don't already have the West translation (*Four Texts on Socrates*), you should get it.

III. **Grading:**

—class participation: 20%

—5 minute in-class presentation summarizing or supplementing what we covered in the previous class: 20%

—12-15 page paper due at the end of the term that will require both original textual analysis and a summary treatment of the themes of the course: 60%